Opening of Legislature — *Handful of Spectators*

Steady Rain Soaks Ceremony

Only a handful of spectators, a few seagulls and the military braved a steady rain which marred outdoor ceremonies accompanying opening of the third session of British Columbia's 25th Legislature.

The seagulls left soonest—at the booming sound of the first round of a 15-gun salute.

The spectators stayed a few minutes longer, until Lieutenant-Governor Frank Ross entered the legislature buildings, on his way to read the Throne Speech.

The color guard of 100 RCAF men, plus band and officers, stayed on to the bitter end. So did the detachment of the 5th Medium Battery, RCA, which fired the ceremonial salute.

When the lieutenant-governor arrived for the official opening of the House the RCAF color was paraded for the first time at a legislature opening.

The color party carried the Queen's color of the RCAF as well as the air force color. These colors are kept at 5 Air Division Headquarters, Vancouver, and are only used for ceremonial occasions.

The lieutenant-governor took the salute standing on the rainswept steps of the main entrance to the legislature. Less than 100 yards away six-pounders slammed off the 15-gun salute. Thick acrid smoke drifted over the scene.

The colors, and most of the few spectators who turned out, were considerably wilted by the rain when Lieutenant-Governor Ross arrived, wearing a cloak over his court dress.

Ignoring the rain, the lieutenant-governor inspected the full guard and then went over to salute and speak to the band.

The crowd, estimated at well under 200, stood huddled under umbrellas and raincoats. It dispersed rapidly as soon as the official party entered the buildings.

To keep warm at their post, while ceremonies went on inside the chamber, the guard of honor marked time on the spot and the band played cheerful music. The rain never let up.

At one time during the long wait there was a ripple of laughter down the ranks as a boy on a delivery bike pedalled down the front rank and cut loose with an admiring whistle.

Then—one final salute and the official cars with motorcycle escorts pulled away.

Flt. Lt. Allan Robinson of North Vancouver, personnel administration officer at Comox, was guard commander, with FO Robert Burnie, a guard officer.

The Queen's color officer was Flt. Lt. Hugh Hamilton, and the RCAF color officer was FO Raymond Chapman.

Capt. T. G. Dalzell commanded the 5th Medium Battery.

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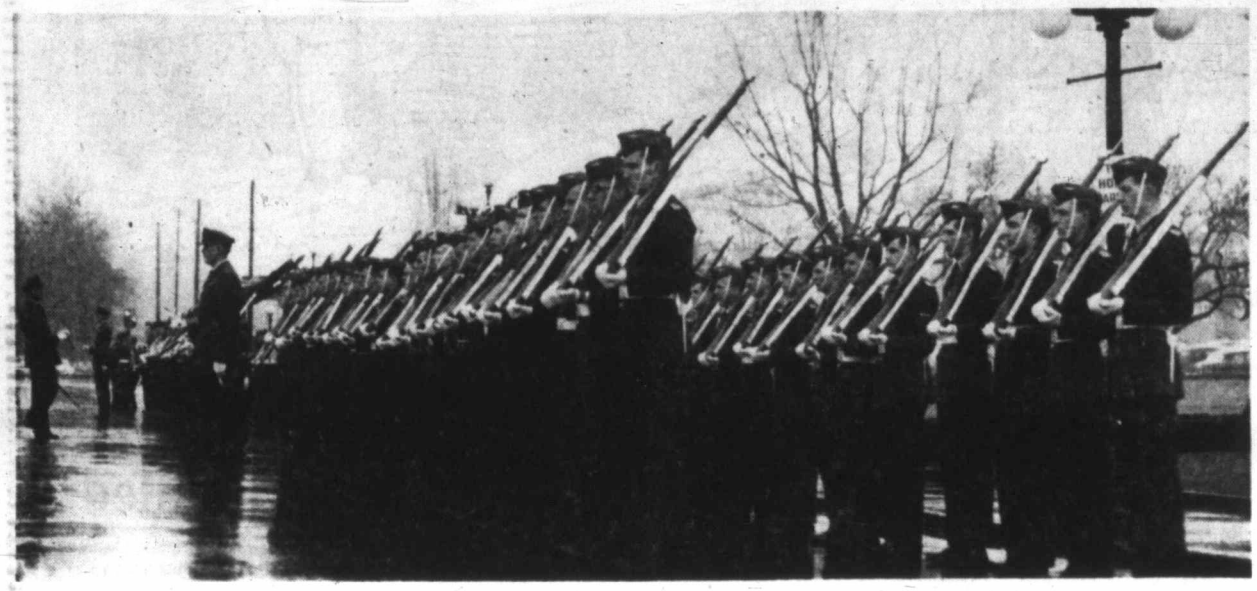

Soaked but far from bedraggled are these smartly turned-out members of the RCAF guard of honor at yesterday's opening of third session of B.C.'s 25th Legislature. They stood in rain for more than an hour. Honor guard and band came from Comox.

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Reorganization to Split Health, Welfare Branches

Continued from Page 1

his government program, would indicate a light session as Premier Bennett predicts, but opposition members have other ideas and have already been noticed boning up on the McPhee Tree Fruits Report, the Sommers case and Wenner-Gren development.

But the surprising part of the speech was that no mention was made of labor legislation, and for months now Premier Bennett has been devoting major portions of his speeches to the fact the B.C. government will not be pushed around by labor or management. At least half a dozen organizations have presented briefs to cabinet asking for labor legislation changes.

DEEPLY CONCERNED

But the Throne Speech did say the government is deeply concerned with unemployment and that despite an accelerated program and a huge and unprecedented expenditure of public funds on government buildings, works, highways, bridges, park development and other programs, the unemployment problem remains serious.

It said the government will recommend that the select standing committee on labor be reconvened immediately for the purpose of studying the problem.

The Throne Speech said "it is desirable that this committee meet with all interested individuals and groups—labor, employers and others — and conduct an inquiry into the ways and means of improving the situation."

Out of these meetings new labor legislation may be developed and new proposals to alleviate unemployment.

Legislation will be introduced to expand provisions for the education and training of mentally retarded children.

INCREASED GRANTS

Authorization will be asked for increased grants to school districts as well as to the University of British Columbia and Victoria College.

An expanded system of loans, scholarships, and bursaries will be made available to facilitate achievement of higher standards of education by students of senior matriculation standing at Victoria College and UBC.

Still not yet recovered from last year's disastrous forest fires, which cost the government $4,000,000 in fire-fighting costs and industry another $1,000,000, it is intended to submit new legislation respecting compulsory utilization, with compensation, of machinery and equipment suitable for forest fire suppression.

Legislation will be introduced to create Douglas Day, first celebrated last year on Nov. 19, as an annual day of observance.

Other Throne Speech highlights:

1. Legislation will be introduced to establish a horse racing commission.

2. Provision will be made for additional B.C. supreme court judges. Attorney-General Bonner had earlier said he will ask for two more judges, raising the total from 12 to 14.

3. A new Wills Act, of interest to every citizen of B.C., will be introduced.

4. It is proposed to increase substantially the amount of credit that may be extended under the Farmers' Land Clearance Assistance Act and to lengthen considerably the period of repayment.

5. A consolidation of legislation relating to dyking and drainage will be submitted.

6. Needs of the province for advanced technical training programs are now being surveyed.

7. The Ferries Act will be brought to the floor of the House to discuss subsidies.

8. The Forest Act will be brought in line with other legislation.

9. Amendments of mining legislation will be proposed to recognize scientific advances in the field of exploration and to encourage exploration.

10. Benefits of poliomyelitis immunization will be expanded during this year.

One New Building Every Five Weeks

During the last three years a new major public building has been completed by the provincial government at the rate of one every five weeks, Lieutenant Governor Frank Ross said in his Spech from the Throne yesterday.

His 40th Session

Dean of the legislature, 84-year-old Thomas Uphill, Fernie MLA, started his 40th session of the legislature yesterday with a little clowning before the lieutenant-governor arrived for official opening ceremonies. The independent labor member sat down in the premier's chair, trying it out for size as he has been doing at House openings for years.

Premier Enters Alone

Premier Bennett made his grand entrance into the legislative assembly alone yesterday. He appeared slightly nervous as he walked down the aisle, smiling, and stopped only to shake hands with Mrs. Lois Haggen (CCF, Grand Forks), one of the two women members.

Mrs. Haggen had a vase of flowers placed on her desk, but the other woman member Mrs. Buda Brown (SC, Vancouver-Point Grey) didn't even have a desk. She sat in the second row of chairs.

Except for the front row, desks usually used by MLAs had been removed so more chairs could be used for guests.

Speech from Throne

Pomp and Dignity Opening Keynote

Lieutenant-Governor Frank Ross took 30 minutes to read the Speech from the Throne at the opening yesterday of the third session of the 25th Legislature.

His Honor entered the legislative chamber with all the traditional pomp and ceremony that goes with the House opening. His aide-de-camps, marching in pairs and including Brig. John Adam, Lt.-Cmdr. J. C. Davie, Wing Cmdr. J. D. D. Campbell and RCMP Inspector T. A. Horn, entered the hushed chamber first, followed in single file by Government House secretary Cmdr. Garfield Dixon and sergeant-at-arms Denzil Ashby carrying the mace. His Honor mounted the dais as his aides stepped to each side.

SAME DIGNITY

Then he read the Throne Speech and left the chamber with the same dignity.

There were close to 600 persons in the legislative chamber to see the official opening.

Before the lieutenant-governor entered, Donald L. Brothers, recently elected Socred member for Rossland-Trail, was introduced to the legislative assembly and took his seat in the House as MLAs from both sides of the floor thumped their desks.

RANG THREE TIMES

Then the division bell rang three times to signal the lieutenant-governor was approaching.

After he left, the House got down to some minor business before adjourning until 3 p.m. today.

Attorney-General Robert Bonner, Works Minister W. N. Chant, I. F. Corbett (SC, Yale), opposition leader Robert Strachan, and Archie Gibbs (Lib., Oak Bay), were named to a committee to name select standing committees.

Alex Matthew (SC, Vancouver Centre) was elected deputy speaker.

Attorney-General Bonner introduced Bill No. 1, "An Act to amend the Interpretation Act."

About 15 annual reports were tabled.

$142,729,384

Millions More Borrowed

An increase of $143,729,348.40 in contingent liabilities (government guaranteed borrowings) was noted in Public Accounts brought down by Premier Bennett at the Legislature yesterday.

They increased from $241,334,638.58 in 1957 to $385,163,986.98 in 1958.

MORE THAN $100,000,000

The previous year contingent liabilities increased by more than $100,000,000.

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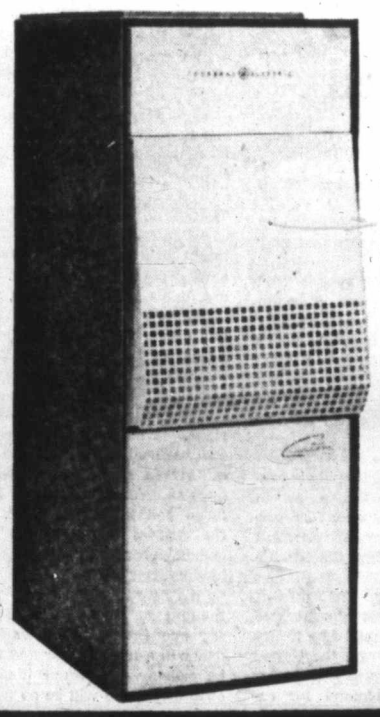

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